



MEDIA FAIRNESS INITIATIVE: A WEEKLY LOOK AT BIAS IN THE NEWS

Friday, September 28, 2007



New York Times Admits It Gave MoveOn a Discount

After repeated denials, the *New York Times* admitted this week that it should not have given MoveOn.org a discount for its full-page ad attacking Gen. Petraeus. MoveOn should have paid \$142,000 – not \$65,000 – for the ad, which asked the question “General Petraeus or General Betray Us?” and accused him of “cooking the books for the White House.”

The Times guaranteed that the ad would run on September 10 – the same day Gen. Petraeus testified before Congress – meaning the discounted rate should not have applied. MoveOn has since agreed to pay back the difference of \$77,000. According to public editor Clark Hoyt, *the Times* also violated its own policy barring “attacks of a personal nature.”

Meanwhile, Congress has approved bipartisan measures in both the House and Senate condemning MoveOn’s attack on Gen. Petraeus. Members of Congress also have signed a letter requesting a hearing to examine the ad’s ramifications.

Poll Shows Majority of Americans Perceive Bias in the News

A survey shows that a solid majority of Americans are aware of news bias and consider it a “big problem.” The poll, which was released this month by the non-partisan First Amendment Center, found that about two-thirds of respondents believe the media has sufficient freedom to report the news, but most still distrust the news media.

In fact, **62% of respondents believe that “falsifying stories is a big problem in the news media.”** In addition, **60% disagree with the statement “The media try to report the news without bias.”**

Network Morning Shows Focus on Democrat Candidates

A recent Media Research Center (MRC) survey analyzed all 517 campaign segments on ABC’s *Good Morning America*, CBS’s *The Early Show*, and NBC’s *Today* from January 1 through July 31.

The survey found that **Democrats received nearly double the coverage as Republicans** with 284 stories focusing on the Democratic contest compared to 152 focusing on the Republican contest (the remaining stories were either neutral or focused on third party candidates). In addition, **all three of the Democratic frontrunners received more attention than any of the top Republican candidates**, with Senator Hillary Clinton receiving the most coverage of all.

According to the MRC survey, **the network morning shows featured 4 hours and 35 minutes of airtime devoted to interviews with Democrat campaigns, compared to just 1 hour and 44 minutes of interview time with Republican campaigns.** To view the full report and complete results, please visit the Media Research Center’s website at www.mrc.org.